THE EDUCATION OF BOYS

PALLEN

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BY

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JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY

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FOREWORD

These letters on the Christian education of boys were published serially some years ago in the *Dolphin,* an admirable magazine for the Catholic laity, whose brief but useful career was due to the scholarly zeal of the Reverend H. J. Heuser. It is with Father Heuser's kind permission, that the series is here reproduced in a more permanent form.

I believe that the letters are more pertinent now than when they first saw the light in the pages of the *Dolphin.* The unhappy practice of sending Catholic boys to non-Catholic educational institutions has been waxing rather than waning. I know the ancient excuse that there are exceptions, i. e., circumstances which justify the practice on the part of some parents, but when exceptions cease to prove the rule and begin to be the rule among a certain type of

Catholics, it should give us pause. Personally I have never met an exception that would bear analysis. When boiled down to the real ingredients, parental weakness or parental ambition proves generally to be the residue. Either the boy determines the choice out of his own immaturity and ignorance of danger, or the parent weighs a pseudo-worldly advantage over against the spiritual hazard and tips the beam against the Faith. If there be real exceptions, they are like the stories of the man-eating shark and the sea-serpent. I do not deny their possibility, but I am prone to skepticism.

When I look at results I see disaster as the rule. It is a rare and extraordinary boy who gets a non-Catholic education and remains stanch all through and always. Either the Faith is entirely lost or becomes so diluted that it disappears entirely in the second generation. As for the counter-charge, sometimes advanced by the advocates of the exceptions, that even some Catholic boys who have received a Catholic education, abandon their Faith in after

years, I can only say that this unfortunately happens sometimes; not, however, *because* they have received a Catholic education, but *in spite* of their Catholic education. Some well-trained boys afterwards become criminals in spite of their excellent home and school training. It would be foolish to advocate the abolition of the Ten Commandments, because some people, who have been reared under their discipline, refuse in later life to observe them.

The singular notion is sometimes entertained that education is like a man's apparel, an external adornment, whose fashion constitutes its value. Education is not only more than a man's apparel, it is even more than his skin; it belongs to the marrow of his being. It is the making of his character, and has to do with the immortal and most intimate part of man's nature, his soul. The Church has always understood this, wherefore she fully realizes that religion is educative and education is religious, and that the natural fusing of the two in one makes a man to be what he ought to be, a completely balanced rational animal.

This is the ground I take in these letters. It is the only sane ground even for temporal salvation. Even the ancient pagans understood it, and when they ceased to practise it their civilization fell into decay and they perished.

Condé B. Pallen.

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THE EDUCATION OF BOYS

I.

The Flowing Tide.

My Dear Henry:

You may be sure that I was delighted to hear from you and learn all about you and yours after so long an interval. It will, indeed, afford me much pleasure to resume our long interrupted correspondence, broken off, I know not how, so many years ago. We easily drift apart on the currents of life: distance, diversity of pursuits and interests soon divide us, as we each seek our several ways in the divergent avocations that open up before us. But I am sincerely glad to get word from you again, and renew those old ties which held us so closely together in the freshness of our youth and the buoyancy of our early hopes, when life

was very fair to look upon. As we get on in years we learn to appreciate more fully the affection of sincere friendship. When we look with the sober eyes of experience through the long vista of the past, how clearly we see what might have been, and realize how carelessly we have allowed much that is precious to drift idly away from us. I have often thought of this in regard to our early friendship, and have been moved to write you in the hope of its renewal, but deferring action for one or another reason at the time, I allowed the thief, procrastination, to steal away the golden resolve.

Though not hearing from you, I have heard of you several times in recent years. Once through our old college mate, Jack Hutton, who called upon me some two years ago as he was passing through my city. He gave me a very glowing account of your prosperity and success; how high you stand in your community and how substantially you have advanced in the affairs of life. I was about to write you then, but I was called away on an important

business matter to another city, and so again deferring, the delay proved fatal. But now that you have written, I am more than glad to bridge our long silence and resume the familiar intercourse of "auld lang syne."

You write me, you say, with a very definite purpose and on a very vital matter, about which you are somewhat perplexed. You are right, my dear friend; nothing could be of greater moment or fraught with higher responsibilities than the question of the education of your boys. Indeed, I do not know what concern in a father's life carries with it such tremendous duties. I have often trembled in my own soul upon thinking of the far-reaching results of a father's direction and guidance in this affair of education. Into our hands are committed the destinies of precious souls! It is a fearful trust! What a burden we take upon our shoulders when we accept the cares of paternity! I, for one, would fairly stagger under the heavy responsibilities which it entails, did I not feel and appreciate the aids and alleviations of our Faith.

As it is, the Church is so definite in her teaching in this regard, so insistent, so unmistakably clear, and so helpfully directive, that I have but to follow her wisdom to make the burden sweet and the yoke light.

By this I do not, of course, mean that the Church takes the affair off my hands. Not at all; she illuminates and guides my responsibilities, but leaves them mine none the less. In fact, she emphasizes my responsibilities by a tremendous enforcement. She declares that upon the proper fulfilment of my paternal duties in this affair of education depends in great measure my own salvation; neglect here is at the peril of my own soul! The greater the dangers and the temptations around us, the more ardent, the more zealous, the more outspoken, the more pressing does she become in prompting, urging and directing us, nay, more, in imperatively demanding our obedience, where she sees we would easily succumb to the dread peril of recreancy under the stress of seductive and constant temptations.

For you must have realized, as I have, the vast and unremitting forces in our day and country, which are constantly pulling against the anchorage of the Faith in the hearts of our people. The social and political traditions around us are not rooted in the Faith; our present surroundings are distinctly un-Catholic and are becoming, day by day, more secularized, until the life about us has become practically desupernaturalized, if I may use the expression. In our relations with our fellow-men, the vast majority of whom have not the faintest idea of what the Faith is, nay, rather, oftener know it only as it has been deformed in their eyes by the calumnies and misrepresentations of long generations of bigoted hostility, there are ten thousand filaments of ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding, that are woven around us to hold us down bound and gagged, as Gulliver by the Lilliputians, until we too often passively submit under the false impression that our case is helpless. In our intellectual life we take the impress of current literature, back of which are centuries of

anti-Catholic tradition. As you know, English literature is anything but Catholic in its spirit and its attitude. Witness the books, the magazines, the newspapers we are ever reading. Now you cannot fail to realize that this constant inflow of un-Catholic, not to say anti-Catholic, matter has the effect of setting the mind in its direction, and so turning the soul, indeed very subtly, away from the Faith.

Remembering all this, note our very natural desire to succeed in life, to achieve, each in his particular avocation, what the world calls success. It is human nature, of course, to bend to circumstances, to adapt itself to conditions and assimilate out of its environment all that will go to make up its temporal well-being. This I say is human nature, and human nature, when left to stand by itself, is a very weak brother.

Considering all these things, then, you see that we have much to contend against; that we are not going with, but against, the stream, if we are true to our Faith; that we need extraordinary strengthening with-

in to resist successfully the foe without, and, what I most especially want to urge as a conclusion, that we require, as our prime need, a thorough training of our powers, spiritual and mental, in Catholic truth and discipline to make us capable, active and valiant soldiers in the inevitable combat which we have to face; in short, that we require a thorough Catholic education to hold the Faith against the tremendous odds that confront us. We need to be steeped, saturated in Catholic principles, until our mental and moral fiber partakes of the nature of that upon which it feeds.

But I have gone beyond the limits of your patience as well as of my time, and have not directly answered your question: Do you think I am in conscience bound to send my boys to a Catholic school? I have laid down some considerations which may serve you as a premise, but must reserve for another letter, the particular circumstances in your case as you put it. Do not delay in answering.

Yours sincerely,

C. B. P.

II.

Our Responsibilities as Parents.

My Dear Henry:

So you think that I was dealing in mere abstractions in my last letter to you; "theorizing in the air," you are pleased to call it. No, my dear friend; I was simply generalizing the very concrete conditions that prevail around us. Read your morning paper, the current magazine on your library table; visit the nearest non-Catholic school; talk with your next-door neighbor, and discover, if you can, the faintest trace of the spirit of positive religion. Reflect on your past experience and tell me if you have not usually found in all these sources an utter ignoring of religion. Is not the dominant principle in all of them what we call secularism, i. e., the banishment of God from the affairs of life?

What I wished to convey to you by my picture was, that we are living in untoward social conditions, whose trend is away from the Faith, and, unless we are ourselves vigorous in the truth of positive, supernatural religion, we will surely be dislodged from our foundations. It is the weakness of human nature to go with the tide, and it is only the strong swimmer that can buffet the flood triumphantly. You yourself are a witness to what I say; I speak frankly, for you have asked me not to spare candor. Moreover, this is a matter touching the welfare of souls, in which friendship would prove false indeed, if it were disloyal to the highest interests involved.

Now the very putting of your question shows that you have been influenced by the un-Catholic spirit of the times. You will no doubt chafe at what I say, even grow indignant, accuse me of being narrow and censorious, and aver that you are just as good a Catholic as I am. Far be it from me to judge you. But have you not appealed to me, and in so doing do you not force me into a critical attitude? Am I not,

therefore, bound, under the sacred obligation of an honest friendship, to point out to you the dangers of your position when I apprehend your peril? I play the censor but to save my friend.

You tell me that I am dogmatic, just as I was in my college days. You are frank; so am I. You know me and yet you come to me. I surmise that you are looking for a positive statement; that in your own secret thought you are seeking for a very positive justification of a stand you hesitate to take. I shall try to satisfy you in spite of the irritation you may feel. The cant of the day flouts dogmatism; contemptuously labels it an ignorant survival of medievalism. In religion as in everything else, dogmatism, we are told, is out of fashion. We must be liberal, broad-minded, granting to every one his or her opinion without trammel or restriction from authority. This is true enough in the region of mere opinion; but when we are on the solid ground of positive truth, it is rank falsehood and folly. The vogue of the modern shibboleth lies in the uncertainty

and infidelity of modern thought. The unbelief of today, having no certainty of its own, furiously denies to others what it lacks in itself. In the question we are discussing, there is neither uncertainty nor mere opinion. I speak positively because I know and do not simply opine. I am dogmatic, that is, positive, because the principles upon which I stand are positive, because the logical process through which I move is positive, and because the conclusion which follows is positive.

Let us put the matter clearly. You ask: Am I bound in conscience to send my boys to a Catholic school? I answer, yes. But, you plead, in my particular circumstances am I so bound? Before entering into the details of your case, let us consider the question broadly, and after we have found our general bearings, we can consider the special conditions, which, you urge, would tolerate an exception in your case. I put the matter in this way, because I notice that there is a weakness in human nature, which leans to the side of the exception and not the rule. I have seen parents fix their

eyes so attentively upon the particularities of the case, that they go blind to the principles. The concrete so easily distracts us from the contemplation of the abstract.

I shall begin in a very simple way by asking in the words of the catechism: "Why did God make us?" and answer, as the catechism does: "To know Him, to love Him, and serve Him in this world that we may be happy with Him forever in the next." You smile, perhaps, and tell me that you know this well enough; that you have been taught this from the very beginning. Obvious enough, indeed, is this fundamental truth to a Catholic. But are its consequences so evident? Do we always realize in the practice of life all its conclusions? What does it mean in the concrete? That all things are to be directed to that end; that nothing escapes the ethical government of that end. Do you not see how simply the broad principle of the question resolves itself?

You are given children that they may save their souls by learning to know, love, and serve God, under your guidance, direc-

tion, and training. That end posited as the one essential truth, for there is no latitude here for mere opinion, your chief concern, your peremptory duty is to bring up your children with a view to that end. Now the bringing up of children means the education of children. Education, as you know, is the development and training of all the human powers and faculties. Does not this begin as soon as the faculties start acting under disciplinary guidance, as soon as the mind learns to appreciate the difference between this and that? We commence to guide our children at a very tender age in one way rather than in another, and seek to give them a bent toward right things and good things and away from wrong and bad things. You have observed this in your own family life, and acted upon this natural parental disposition. Now in the matter of religious training and instruction do you not commence to educate at once? As soon as the child learns to lisp, it is taught its prayers, and told in a simple way, suited to its tender understanding, about heavenly things and the truths of Revelation.

Is not the essential difference between good and bad conduct placed before it by holding before its mind the Divine sanction of rewards and punishments? Is not the Catholic child given as the exemplar of its conduct the Divine Child? We thus train and educate our little ones into virtuous habits. We recognize the necessity of all this from the very beginning, because we appreciate the impressionability and the pliability of the childish mind. All this is education, the informing of the mind by truth, the development of the faculties, the training and discipline of the will into habits of virtue, and the consequent formation of character. We insist upon all this, and would count ourselves moral monsters if we failed to impart it to our children.

What underlies our course of action here? Why, that simple question and its answer which I have just quoted from the catechism. We realize our responsibility, that highest and first responsibility, to lead our children to God. We realize this very keenly in the first stage; why not as

keenly in subsequent stages when larger dangers and graver temptations beset the path of those whom we most love and whose eternal welfare is our chief solicitude?

Sincerely yours,

C. B. P.

III.

The Vital Principle in Education.

My Dear Henry:

You tell me that I simply clubbed you in my last, and that I must expect you to feel sore and resentful after the drubbing. Well, I am not surprised. I did not minimize the situation, because I saw that you had. Our bout is in earnest, though not in rancor. I hope to force you to a proper conclusion, because I know you to be an educated man, who can appreciate a logical process from an evident premise. I shall not take your hard knocks amiss, for I can give as well as take, and promise myself to force the battle to a definite result.

I have laid down as my premise, what you admit, that the end of man is God. You also agree with me, that our life here is a probation for the hereafter, and that the

whole course of life should be determined by its final end. Now, I hold and urge that as education is a most important, indeed the most important, phase in the process of our temporal development, it should be vitally informed by that principle. This you seek to distinguish. I see that you have not forgotten the dialectics of our philosophical disputations at college. You tell me that education has also its secular ends and purposes; that in great measure much in an educational curriculum admits of no formal religious element at all; that in our day and under our social conditions, when Church and State have been sharply separated, and modern life in so many of its aspects has become enfranchised—surely a queer term for a Catholic to use—from ecclesiastical supervision, we must distinguish between secondary and subordinate ends, which are often in themselves indifferent, and the final end, which, though the ultimate norm, is too remote to have a vital bearing and determining influence upon merely secular affairs. At any rate, you say, under the

changed conditions of our times, religion, by other than formal pedagogical means, can supply the lack of its own proper spirit in modern educational life by home-training and the Sunday-school.

The point you here urge as a plea for an indifferent (secular) education is the very reason I advanced in my first letter for the necessity of a religious education. It is the appalling spread of secularism in all departments of modern life, its subtle dangers and insidious temptations, its vast and persistent influence, exercised in a thousand remote and indirect ways, that should rouse us to our own peril and to the necessity of extraordinary measures for the preservation of the Faith. In short, it is that very distinction so sharply drawn between religion and the affairs of life, between the Church and practical human living, as the world now conceives it, that forces upon us the need of a thoroughly positive Catholic education. If we want to hold our own we must protect our own against the assault of the enemy, whether it come disguised or open. Secularism is

that enemy, and its blight is deadly. To divorce practical life from the consideration of its eternal end is virtually to deny that end; it is practical atheism; it is to make God an abstract theory, a speculative nothing, and not that living God in whom we live and move and are. So much for the general bearing of your argument; let us go to the particulars.

You tell me that education has its secular side; that its immediate object is to prepare and equip the child for the practical struggle of life; to sharpen and develop his intelligence; to form his character in a practical way, that he may be the better able to make his way in the world. This is true, but it is not the whole truth. The general purpose of education is to make a stronger man in all respects. In your way of putting it, you ignore a consideration that is vital; education should not only make a man stronger in his mental capacities and abilities and in his resourcefulness to cope with the difficulties of life, for this is your meaning of character, but it should make the truer man, the righteous

man, i. e., the man morally stronger; not only the man who can make his way in the world, but the man who can make his way *against* the world under the stress of its temptations, its deceits, and its snares. In other words, there is an ethical side to education, which is paramount and determines its true scope. Education may be secular in its immediate ends, but it must be moral in its ultimate end. It must, indeed, fit a man for the practical uses of life; but it must fit him in a certain way. Education, in reality, is a fundamental training for conduct. Ethics, as you know, concerns conduct; and conduct, or rational action, as you well know, is always measured by a final end. The norm of human acts is always fashioned upon man's conception of his final end. The man who looks upon this life as the be-all and end-all will have an entirely different norm or moral standard from the man who finds the law of life founded in an eternal existence hereafter. The man who looks upon time as the vestibule of eternity, and realizes that his every act is charged with immortal

issues, sees life from a standpoint radically different from that which he has fashioned for himself who regards the sum of existence to be exhausted in the limits of time. Now, as education ultimately has to do with life as conduct, it must have an ethical basis. It will be postulated either upon the theory that life is merely secular, beginning and ending in time, or upon the theory that life is immortal, beginning in time and enduring through an eternity of misery or happiness as the result of conduct here. As you see, these two theories are sharply opposed. Education cannot escape this ethical necessity, and every educational system stands upon one or the other postulate. In our day all education is divided into one or the other of these camps.

We arrive, then, at this position: You cannot hold that education is merely secular, unless you are prepared to accept as your premise the denial of the life hereafter. This, of course, as a Catholic, you repudiate, and must, therefore, reject the conclusion. By the same logical process

you are forced to hold that, though education is immediately concerned with the preparation for practical life, in its ultimate intent it looks to the paramount interests of eternity.

Your statement that there are many things in an educational curriculum that have no religious element or character, I pass over with the remark, that these studies by no means constitute an education; and I moreover add, that though there may be some courses indifferent in themselves, there are many, and these of the utmost importance, which have a direct and intimate relation with religion. You cannot touch history or literature without considering their religious bearings, or even geography, as it is now taught, without some allusion to religion; and it goes without saying, that philosophy has a most essential bearing upon theology.

When you declare that religion can supply at home and at Sunday-school all that is necessary, it seems to me that you have wofully mistaken the significance and scope of true education; that you forget the

weaknesses and limitations of human nature, and fail to realize the exigencies of our present conditions. When you instruct the mind apart from God, you are laying the foundations of religious indifference. The mind that has been taught without God in its knowledge, and even that God is to be excluded from its knowledge, soon grows into the habit of shutting out God from its mental horizon altogether. The mind that has been developed under a system which excludes God and the things of God from its consideration, soon logically learns to divorce God from its rational processes and to ignore Him in all its intellectual life. God at home and God at church will never make up in the child's mind for the banishment of God at school. Then the process of religious disintegration sets in; the God who does not reign at school, who has no relation to the intellectual life, nay, is ignominiously thrust out of doors in the temple of knowledge, is but half a God, not the all-powerful Creator and Judge who holds us in the hollow of His hand. Reverence for Him dies where He is thus neg-

atively regarded. When Christ and His Church are barred from the schoolroom, it is not a long stride to banishing Christ and His Church from the heart. Never have the enemies of the Church calculated so shrewdly, devised so astutely, and struck more successfully at the Spouse of Christ, than when they laid their plans to divorce religion from education, and so wean the child from its Divine Mother by putting it to suckle the empoisoned breasts of the monster of secularism.

And the Church, with the mother's instinct and love, battles for her children. She fully realizes the danger. She is filled with the love of Christ and cries out with Him: "Suffer these little ones to come unto me; they are mine by the authority of Christ; they are mine under the responsibilities of their eternal salvation." And she struggles and labors, in suffering and in sacrifice, to educate them in all that a Catholic education means. She is not satisfied with the crumbs or the half-loaf for her children; she gives them a full spiritual feast. She educates them all in all and is

not content to give up half to God and half to the Moloch of secularism. Body and soul they belong to God. Christ said that we are to love God with our whole heart, our whole mind, and our whole soul; and His Church insists that heart, soul, and mind belong to God, and she is satisfied with nothing less; for it is her Divine commission to bring man back to God in heart, in soul, and in mind.

Education does not consist merely in feeding the mind with knowledge, but in informing the mind with truth, the will with good, and training all the faculties to the fulness and completeness of the perfectly rounded character. Religion in the schoolroom is like the sunlight to the plant; it warms, it nourishes, it illuminates. It is not sufficient for the plant to gather the elements which it takes from the soil to assimilate into its own being; it must have the light and air of heaven, the vital principle of its energy, without which it soon languishes and dies. Religion should be the light and aroma of the schoolroom, to be absorbed by the child's entire being. It

should radiate into his soul through the intellect, energize through his will, fashion and form his faculties until there is perfect balance of mind and heart and will in that moral harmony of his nature of which religion alone possesses the gift.

No, my dear friend; there is no middle ground here for a consistent Catholic. The Church is jealous of souls, and will surrender nothing to the spirit of the world, which would divide human nature into a distracted being, one part the world's and one part God's. To concede anything to secularism here is to be led to yield all in the end.

Sincerely yours,

C. B. P.

IV.

Not a Loss.

My Dear Henry:

Believe me, my heart goes out to you in your sorrow. I was deeply moved to hear of the death of your little girl. You know that my sympathy is with you in your affliction and how much I desire to comfort you. There is no greater natural sorrow, I believe, than the loss of a little child. How the tendrils of affection gather around our hearts and strike deep root there, when our little ones come into our lives! And it is like tearing our hearts out, when they are taken from us. Death in a young child seems so unnatural, so unreal. Childhood is the last place in the world to look for that dreadful visitant, yet with ruthless scythe he cuts down the tender flower just in the bud. So buoyant,

so fresh with the very ecstasy of life is childhood, that it would seem to be immune from death; that only old age, bent and withered, with all its branches bare of the fruit long ago plucked, and yielding no more, should be fit for the harvest of that blind reaper. Yet the sheaf of death is mostly garnered from the delicate blossoms of childhood. We know that human mortality is greatest in the tender years. But this does not console us for our loss. The fact

> That loss is common does not make
> My own less bitter.

It is a pagan consolation to accept the inevitable and to resign ourselves to affliction simply because it is the common lot. I remember a legend from Buddhist sources, which furnishes a sharp contrast between the pagan and the Christian view of life. A mother, inconsolable for the loss of her infant, appeals to Gautama, the Buddha, to restore it to her. Buddha, and this we are told illustrates the profundity of his wisdom, promises to do so, if she can find

a household which death has not visited. The bereaved mother seeks in vain, and in her hopeless quest learns to realize that death is the common lot of humanity and to bow submissively to the fatal decree. With us, how different! How sublime is our consolation! It is not because death surely comes to all that is mortal, because all humanity goes down to the dust of the earth in the end, that we find the assuagement of our sorrow, consolation in grief and peaceful reconcilement with the universal affliction of death. With the eye of faith we look beyond the grave; we have learned to understand that victory does not rest with this ravager of all life. For our faith is in Christ, whom we know has risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep, and that we with Him shall in the end be clothed with immortality. How sweet, how joyous, how blessed the repose of our hope in Him! Yes, we have His promise that we shall be with our own again in the fulness of the perfect life in God! That little one, from whom you have just been parted, my dear friend, is even

now in the arms of her God, a pledge of His love, awaiting you. What consolation is there like unto your consolation!

Affectionately yours,

C. B. P.

V.

On the Source of Resignation.

My Dear Henry:

I know that resignation is hard when grief is fresh in the heart. Our affections are so bruised, so shocked; and indeed grief is natural. Nor is resignation a barrier or a check to grief. It is rather a channel through which it flows to the great deeps of Divine consolation provided for us out of the fulness of God's love. It is in the treasure-house of faith alone that we find the jewel of resignation. It is to your faith I appeal. If you were a man without faith, one who believes that life finds its all between birth and the grave, whose philosophy is summed up in Shakespeare's lines,

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep,

I would say to you, time will heal the wound; the stream of life will sweep you on to other scenes and other interests, and you will learn to forget. But as a Catholic, who possesses the sublime gift of faith, whose eyes are ever fixed on the supernatural life, who sees the hidden wisdom of God's way, even under the hand of affliction, leading to higher things, I say to you, do not seek to forget, but rather treasure a chastening remembrance of your loss in that larger hope, which promises the hundredfold joy of a future gain, when the hands of time shall have been emptied of all their gifts. Indeed, God sends us these trials to remind us that the fulness of life is not to be found here; to chasten our affections, that they may not wander from Him. This thought is a commonplace of the Catholic life, but it is fruitful if we but take it to heart. We don't realize it until we find ourselves under the crushing wheels of sorrow. It is only when the heart is bruised and torn, like the ploughed field, that it is prepared for the planting of this celestial seed.

Bacon says in his essay on Marriage, that "He that hath a wife and children hath given hostages to fortune." I would rather expect such a sentiment from a Greek or Roman pagan than from the mouth of a Christian. Had he said "He that hath a wife and children hath given hostages to Heaven," his remark would have been pregnant with the profoundest truth it has been given to man to conceive. Our children are hostages to Heaven! Here in a nutshell is the Catholic ideal of the family life. Our children are truly our own, only inasmuch as they are God's. Is not an affliction, such as you have just suffered, but God's way of bringing home to us this tremendous truth so easily forgotten in the hurly-burly of our lives? God has enriched us with this beautiful trust for Himself, and for ourselves, if we are but faithful in its keeping. Hostages to Heaven! they are pledged to God. They are not ours to lead them as we please, merely to our own uses, our own pleasures, our own ends. God is their end; nothing less than the eternal possession of

God Himself! Their right is to be Divinely led to that Divine end.

How lucidly does this profound consideration lead to the solution of the question of education which has been the subject of our correspondence. The Church looks upon all souls as hostages to Heaven committed to her care. So she regards our children. You must educate your children for God, she insists. There is but one kind of education which leads our children to God, and that is Catholic education, for it is filled with the spirit of God. To fail in this is to betray our trust.

Sincerely yours,

C. B. P.

VI.

On Disciplining Young Children.

My Dear Henry:

You cannot discipline a child as you would a soldier. Childhood has no understanding of the reason of things; it does not foresee ends, and has no just apprehension of means. It lives in an atmosphere of simple joy. Dante somewhere, I cannot just now recall where, but I think in the "Paradiso," speaks of the soul as coming bounding and joyous from the hand of its Creator; and Wordsworth, speaking of childhood, says:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Appareled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.

Joy is a natural affection of childhood. Too much and too rigid discipline cripples

this natural movement, and so clouds and blights the freshness of the soul, the joy of innocence. The iron of Puritanism sunk into the soul in childhood sours and hardens it, and often leads to revolt in maturer years. I suppose that you have observed that boys brought up in the strait-jacket of puritanical discipline, when they get a chance to relish the first taste of freedom from the odious restraint of their younger years, frequently rush headlong into excess. It is this observation, I suppose, that has led to the common notion that clergymen's sons usually turn out badly. Protestantism used to be very rigid in the imposition of its observances upon the young, and this doubly so in the instance of the families of ministers. Carlyle's brutal saying that boys are simply young beasts, and that if he had his way, he would bring them up in a barrel and feed them through the bung-hole until they were twenty-one, is simply the hyperbole of the puritanical conception of juvenile discipline. With its recent decay, the puritanical regime of Protestantism has pro-

portionately relaxed, so that the old saying about clergymen's sons is somewhat obsolete.

I do not believe in exacting too much from children. In essential things the parent should make an absolute demand upon their obedience, letting it be understood in such cases that the rule is inflexible; this, of course, in all matters of religious and moral requirements. But where there is no question of these, we should "temper the wind to the shorn lamb." I know nothing so exasperating, so exhausting to the temper and to the firmness of resolution as the everlasting "don't" to a child. It makes life a burden to both parent and child. I learned this early in my experience, and soon realized what a road full of thorns and briars that parent treads who imagines that the ideal of raising children is to march them in the straight and narrow path of military discipline. I have learned to overlook much that in the fervor of my first parental experience I regarded as my duty to enforce strictly. So stern a course makes a child an enemy, thrusting

back upon itself that natural flow of love which gushes so bountifully out of the child's heart for the parent, forcing the little soul into tricks of deceit to hide its shortcomings, and hardening it into moods of resentment against the mistaken harshness of the parent, who errs, indeed, only through love, yet none the less thwarts his own purpose while losing the affection of the child. There are many things which we must not see. The apprehension of too sharp a vigilance drives these little souls into a furtive reticence, like snails into their shells. They are naturally open, sunny, bright. We should not cloud their skies by a perpetual frown.

On the other hand we may sin by the other extreme: by overlooking too much, by shirking, out of sheer disinclination to take the trouble or through excessive affection, the enforcement of necessary discipline, and by neglecting to administer, at the required time, that chastisement which is a tonic to the wayward soul. A child brought up without regimen, needless to say, is systematically spoiled and grows

into a lawless and unruly spirit. A wayward child is nearly always an evidence of negligent parents. A flower soon withers with too much sunshine or too much shade. There is a happy mean which steers clear of the Scylla of severity and the Charybdis of laxity. This mean it is the part of parents to seek out according to their own and their children's dispositions; for there are always idiosyncrasies of temperament and character to be taken into account. One child is not as another, and while we lay down a general principle for all, it is not always applicable in the same way. One child differs from another in irascibility, for instance; and our method in dealing with this one or that one must discreetly vary according to disposition and the exigencies of time and place.

In our time the child has not escaped the faddist. He is being botanized under the microscope of speculating theorists until he ceases to be recognized in the healthful daylight. We have now a child psychology, with writers and lecturers by the legion to

analyze, expound, and label the compartments of the child's soul and the components of his nervous system. It is noticeable that with the increase of child study, as evolved in our day, the propagation of children correspondingly diminishes. It may be observed also, that as faith decays, children disappear; and where fifty years ago every household rang with the happy glee of childish voices, there now reigns a luxurious silence, or if, perchance, there should be one or two little souls in the spacious emptiness of the modern mansion, there is a hush and oppressiveness in the atmosphere stifling the joyousness that belongs by right Divine to the soul of childhood.

Thank God, we Catholics have the wisdom of the Church to guide us in this day of corruption; we still believe in children! That saving common sense of the parental instinct, which the Church so carefully treasures, still flourishes amongst us, and, fortified by the grace of the Sacraments, we still fulfil the duties of the married state. Though Dante mentions no specific

place in the Inferno for those who pervert the natural end of marriage, because that sin did not prevail in his day, there is a logical place whither they naturally sink, and that is where the poet saw his old instructor, Brunetto Latini.

Your remark that you found it hard to establish a thorough discipline amongst your children, especially the younger ones, has led me somewhat off my immediate subject. I imagined from what you said, that you have been trying to exact more than the tender years of the little ones can well bear, and so I have taken this occasion to make some suggestions gathered from my own experience. I will have to reserve for a future letter the consideration of your charge against the system of Catholic education in general.

Sincerely yours,

C. B. P.

VII.

A Sweeping Charge and a Rebuttal.

My Dear Henry:

I have been absent from home for the past week, and now hasten to answer your last letter, which I found waiting for me. You tell me that you are not criticizing in any hostile spirit, but that you are simply desirous to sift the matter thoroughly for your own satisfaction and to square your understanding with your conscience. I appreciate your attitude, but none the less I shall not spare your position, or modify the vigor of my defense. Though you are simply assuming the role of an aggressive opponent, I shall hit as hard as if I had a real foe in front of me, and rely on the stanchness of your friendship to act as a buffer against the shock of my blows.

In the first place you bring a sweeping

indictment against the general system of Catholic education: that it is backward, out-of-date, medieval. Now what do you precisely mean by this? If you mean that it has not taken up every fad of the hour; that it has not encumbered itself with the bag and baggage of every new theory and speculation, and they are legion; that it has not "modernized" itself at the expense of emasculating itself; that it has not rushed headlong into unfledged experiments at their mere proposal; but that it is conservative and holds the established way of a long and proved experience; that it refuses to depart from the wisdom of the past at the beck of present impulse and the bidding of the folly of the hour, which ignores the relation of today with yesterday as well as the dependence of tomorrow on all that has preceded it: if this be your meaning, for this is your meaning when stripped of its sophisms, why, then I agree with you; and I not only agree with you, but I rejoice to see that Catholic educators have not lost their heads amidst the

wild *charivari* that is now making babel in the educational world.

But do not mistake my meaning. I do not mean to say that the Catholic system has no shortcomings; that it is perfect and ideal; that everything in it is good and nothing bad. Nor do I mean that there has been no kind of betterment or advance in things educational in the past hundred years; for in the accidentals there has been much improvement, though I fail to see any startling advance in the essentials. All I do is to confront your sweeping assertion with a reasonable denial, stating my grounds in a general way.

What I lay down is this: Catholic education is not to be flouted and condemned as obsolete, because it has not accepted the fiat of irresponsible doctrinaires, and adopted innovations which have no warrant in experience and no foundation in reason; innovations, as often based as not, upon philosophical speculations that run counter to Catholic teaching and are rooted in false metaphysical theories. What I further affirm is this: that the Catholic system is

in substance and in spirit sane and sound; that it is the outcome of a long and varied experience; that it has regard to the nature of man in his essence and in his integrity, as a spiritual, moral, and intelligent being; that it holds as a cardinal principle that no side of human nature can be neglected in education without destroying man's integrity; that its object is to educate man wholly, fully, and symmetrically by holding a proper balance between all his powers in their natural hierarchy; that its aim and accomplishment is to preserve this unity by the harmonious development of all his faculties; finally, that it employs those means best adapted to this end. It follows, therefore, that the Catholic system founded on this principle postulates man's religious and moral schooling as of primary importance. It furthermore follows, that it recognizes education as fundamentally a system of training, and that the end to be attained is not simply knowledge, but truth.

This last reflection leads to a vital distinction between the general character of what in the lump I may call the modern-

izing spirit of education and the Catholic system. The end kept in view by the Catholic system is the acquisition of truth. Now truth is the natural food of the intellect, the nourishment of its activities, the informing principle of its perfection. It is in truth that the mind rests as in its native haven. It is in truth that it finds the supreme satisfaction which is necessary for the fullest exercise of activity. It is this possession of truth that actuates the powers, invigorates their energies, perfects them in strength. To make the mind capable of attaining and holding truth is the object of Catholic education. In its system, therefore, the main stress is thrown upon training the powers and faculties by graded processes of exercises, which will best contribute to this end. It is to be kept clearly in mind that the idea here is not the mere acquirement of knowledge, but a rounded and balanced development of all the energies of heart and mind and soul to the attainment of truth. Knowledge which comes by instruction is only one of the means to this end.

Now the modern system, or what you please to call the up-to-date system, simply inverts the Catholic system, although, indeed, it is not fully conscious of its own method. It is founded in the sentiment of agnosticism, long ago rooted in the Kantian denial of the objective validity of truth. It repudiates the certainty of truth in the mind, and therefore the responsibility of its possession. Into this attitude the modern system stands driven by the necessity of its own logic, and it makes little difference whether it be conscious or not of the skeptical basis upon which it rests. Most modern educators, I believe, are ignorant of their own foundations. Skepticism is the premise of the system they have adopted, and they drive ahead to the conclusion wittingly or unwittingly. This is the metaphysical disease that underlies the educational secularism of the day; this is the bane that circulates through the blood of the modern pedagogical body. The rational postulates of faith are denied at the very fountain-head, and the possibility of the possession of any

ultimate truth, that truth which is the center and circumference of all intellectual activity, is banished from the field. Under this vicious conception religious truth is relegated to the lumber-room of superstitious inutilities. It follows in the inevitable wake of this premise that the end of such a system of education is not the attainment of truth, but of mere knowledge, the gathering, the marshaling, and the classification of data, facts and events; and to these it is limited; for the truth, which is the soul back of them, their explanation and their reason, is necessarily shut out from the horizon of the mind walled in by the narrow hypothesis of an ultimate unknowable. To know God is the foundation of real knowledge. But modern secularism has rigidly banished God from the schoolroom. Its first commandment is: "Thou shalt *not* know the Lord thy God; and thou shalt make a graven image before which thou shalt fall down and adore." That graven image is humanity. Since the spread of the modern system of secularism in education the cult of humanitarianism

has grown apace. It is the positivism of August Comte modeled into an educational program.

I have just remarked that the end of Catholic education was the attainment of the truth. Let me explicate this idea a little further. We are going down to first principles. I take it that a really educated man is one who has been trained to arrive at first principles. It is because you have received a Catholic education that I take it for granted that you are capable of the analytical process which reaches down to fundamental conceptions, to that sufficient reason of things which philosophy achieves. I am using you as a practical illustration of the truth of my proposition, viz., that you exemplify the Catholic principle of education as the matured intellectual fruit of a system of education whose object is so to train and instruct (build up) the mind as to render it capable of attaining and possessing the truth. I urge your own trained capacity for reasoning with clearness, precision and accuracy as a concrete demonstration of the inestimable advan-

tage derived from a system of education whose end is the possession of truth, over a system whose end is the mere acquirement of knowledge in ignorance of the truth. But as I have gone beyond the limits of my time, I will take up this point in a future communication.

Yours sincerely,

C. B. P.

VIII.

Truth *versus* Knowledge as the End of Education.

My Dear Henry:

To begin where I left off in my last: the Church from the beginning has addressed herself to the task in the intellectual world of showing the harmony between reason and faith. St. Paul charges us with giving a reason for the faith that is in us. You know how mightily and gloriously scholastic philosophy accomplished that purpose. You also know how utterly ignorant of scholastic philosophy Modernism is. There is a deeper reason for this than appears on the surface. Modernism in the spirit of the last three centuries has ignored, i. e., cultivated an ignorance of, scholastic philosophy, in its studious attempt to do away with the supernatural. It has disavowed

the supernatural under the dominance of its passions, and naturally seeks to be rid of that higher science which holds reason in the orbit of harmony with faith. Perhaps you imagine that I am wandering far from the subject; what has this to do with the question of education? Everything. The Catholic system of education is based essentially upon the scholastic principle that there is concord between reason and faith. Modern education, i. e., secularism in education, takes its stand upon the ground, that between reason and faith there is no relation whatever. In the latter's premise, man's life ends in time; hence it is concerned with immediate and visible things only. It has, therefore, no ultimate principle of generalization, no ground of a final principle, in which all is synthesized into a higher unity; no sufficient reason by which the intellectual life is illuminated and in which it rests. It simply gathers and classifies knowledge under distinct and separate heads, but cannot unify it into a whole. So it instructs in data and facts. If you observe closely, you

will readily see how secularism in education has resolved itself into institutions of mere instruction, *omnium gatherums* of everything under the sun without any higher bond of coherence. Note its innate tendency to analyze, to specialize; but it has no power of synthesis. Look at non-Catholic colleges in this country with their corps of innumerable professors, each in his own independent specialty regardless of the other; each in his own small workshop hammering out his heap of data; each burrowing in his own tunnel leading he knows not whither, nor cares. Observe the trend to electivism, to the freedom of choice on the part of the student of mere fragments of knowledge. See how it offers to the untrained, unschooled, unprepared, unsettled mind of youth a choice in a bewildering field of knowledge, of two or three subjects as it wills, according to its caprice or its ignorance. What does this signify? Simply that secularism, having no eyes to see further than the immediate present, looks upon education as a mere gathering of haphazard knowledge, and

has no idea of that further and larger end, of which Catholic education has never lost sight: truth.

Now turn your eyes upon our Catholic colleges; what do you observe? Institutions by no means so well-equipped in the material order, for they are never or rarely endowed to the amount of a farthing, but institutions with their eyes ever upon the higher intellectual life, a system with a well graded curriculum, whose end is to train, fashion, and develop the mind in the fulness of truth, truth in the natural order, truth in the supernatural order, and truth in the correspondence of the two. On the one hand, its object is to develop mental power in the intellectual life, and on the other, to form character in the moral life, and so to fuse and unite the two, that one shall ring to the other as sweet bells attuned, in perfect harmony. Observe that Catholic colleges do not run to specialism nor to electivism. They cling tenaciously to the old ideal, the true ideal, the classic ideal, the ideal of the humanities, the ideal of what is called a liberal education, the

ideal of training and broadening all the powers and faculties of the mind and soul by the study of a required curriculum, graded and balanced from the rudiments to philosophy, so that the mind may become settled in all the components of all that education means, not taken piecemeal, but in a just gradation of harmonized exercises, each observing its own proper place in unity and under the government of a clearly conceived and fixed end.

You have no doubt heard and read many a flout at Catholic education; it was the flout of ignorance, not of an invincible but of a culpable ignorance. Some years ago, "the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges-in-the-country" took occasion, with an insolence born as much of a latent fear as of studied ignorance, to class Jesuit and Moslem colleges under a common stigma as types of educational stagnation. He delivered himself of this utterance in an address advocating the extension of the elective system to secondary and high schools. There was an unconsciously profound connection in his thought. Under the

hypnotic influence of secularism, he was instinctively striking at that system of education which is most radically and successfully opposed to the educational revolution which he represents. Moving with the trend of secularism to the disintegration of the solidarity of real education, he sought to demolish the one great barrier to modern educational decadence by contemptuously yoking it with Islamic effeteness. This was the ruse, for it cannot be dignified into strategy, of a combatant, who futilely imagines that he assures an easy victory to himself, by contemning the only enemy who has the power to dislodge him. Hurling this off-hand dart of opprobrium to transfix the foe upon the barb of contempt, he fondly believes the field clear and the way of his march to triumph unimpeded. With the one formidable opponent thus brushed aside at the start, the struggle would naturally be short and brutally victorious over that remnant of the secularists who still cling to the old ideal without knowing precisely why. But the very

character of the subterfuge betrayed the weakness of the cause, which found it necessary to resort to so despicable a method; and the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges learned, to the irreparable loss of his reputation for astuteness, that the system which he with a wave of the hand would consign to the graveyard with Islamism, could produce a champion whose accomplishments and equipment, whose skill and vigor showed anything but the moribund conditions that he would have the world believe enshroud, like the cerements of death, the body of Catholic education.

A learned Jesuit took up the gauntlet the-President-of-one -of- our - largest - colleges flung down but never intended should be lifted. Was it to the surprise of the gentleman who had pronounced the Jesuit system of education dead and buried under the avalanche of the last four centuries of progress? Have you ever read the pamphlet of the Jesuit professor? You would never have written to me, my dear friend, as you have upon the subject

of Catholic education, had you read the answer of the Jesuit Father.

Do you remember the Emperor Saladin's wonderful feat, as narrated in Scott's "Talisman," of cutting in twain, with a single movement of his skilful wrist, a silken cushion resting on the edge of his scimitar? It was in this delicate way the Jesuit professor dealt with the insult of the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges, only in this instance the silken cushion was filled with sawdust. Ah, how keen and true, trenchant and sure, how courteous and elegant, how clear and logical, and how profound in its exposition, was this short pamphlet of some thirty-six pages, riddling the sneering sophism, under whose *brutum fulmen* the champion of secularism thought to smash the medieval pretensions of Catholic education! What a sunny ripple of generous laughter spread in ever-widening circles throughout the educational world when the sawdust spilled out from the silken rent in the dissevered cushion! I have a copy of the Jesuit

Father's pamphlet. I will send it to you; but you must return it, as I value it highly, both as a piece of admirable logic and of delightful literature.

Yours sincerely,

C. B. P.

IX.

Specialism in Education.

My Dear Henry:

Yes, I have taken "a rather high stand." It is time for Catholics to let the world know that they stand high. We stand high because we stand upon the heights, upon the mountain's top, where the Church stands. We stand high because we are members of her body, who is the Spouse of Christ. In this matter of education we stand highest of all. One of our difficulties is that there are some Catholics who, under the delusion of the world's folly, don't know where they stand, and fatuously imagine that the bruit of the groundlings is the applause of progress. They don't see in our Catholic colleges the sensible evidences of prosperity, big endowments, big clusters of buildings, big corps of pro-

fessors, big crowds of students, a superabundance of various kinds of apparatus, and therefore conclude that we are not "up-to-date." To be up to date with them is to be in the fashion. Now, fashion is simply the imposition of the hour upon human vanity. The fashion of yesterday is ridiculous today, and the fashion of today will be ludicrous tomorrow. This is because fashion is only the incarnation of change, the obsession of the spirit of the times, whose visage is never twice the same. Fashion is begot out of accidental and ephemeral circumstances; and when these have passed away, its folly is revealed in all its ugliness; it loses its relation to the current fancy. Baggy trousers today, tight trousers tomorrow; short coats now reign, long coats will have their turn tomorrow. This not only prevails in matters of dress, but in all the regions of human vicissitude, and not less in affairs of education. Now, the world, that hurly-burly of change, often measures a man by the cut of his coat. This may be harmless enough in the domain of costumes. But when

there is question of higher things, this gage of esteem is a blunder and often a crime. When the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges undertook to confound the Jesuit system of education with Moslem methods, he made a blunder; we will not call it a crime. But when a Catholic, under the impulse of the *Zeitgeist,* disparages Catholic education, he commits a crime. He is disloyal, where he should be faithful; he is ignorant, where he should have knowledge.

Let me put the matter in contrast: The Catholic system of education has held to the true ideal; the secular system has strayed away from it. The Catholic system has persevered in the right path, because, under the guidance of the Church, it has ever kept in view the attainment of truth as the end of education. The secular system has wandered into the wilderness, because it has lost sight of this proper end. Secularism, ignoring truth as the object of the intellectual life, has set up false idols, and has started in wild pursuit of two fads of the hour, two fashions, specialism and

electivism, upon which it is wrecking the cause of education. It was only the other day that I came upon the following pregnant sentence in an essay (*"The Authority of Criticism, and Other Essays," by William P. Trent; Scribner's*) by a non-Catholic writer, who was discussing the subject of "Literature and Morals": "It would be hard," he says, "to estimate the harm that has been done to the young men of this country through the discovery they must have been making of late, that most of their teachers have been specialists—knowing only one class of books and caring little for literature and art in their widest application." I think that if you will ponder carefully all this sentence implies, you will find the essence of the distinction I have been making between the Catholic and secular systems of education. You have in this passage a striking indictment of the results of specialism in education and the affirmation of its universality. Whether the young men of this country are discovering the harm done to them by specialism is a question I pass over; I doubt very much if they

are. Howbeit, the writer says that it has harmed them, and, furthermore, affirms that this injury, which breeds from the teacher to the pupil, arises from the mental limitations it has imposed upon them; it has rendered them incapable of duly appreciating "literature and art in their widest application." In other words, it has failed to educate them, to give them that broad and accurate basis of mental training and culture which is called a liberal education, and without which a man becomes mentally narrowed and short-sighted. The teachers are specialists; like the Homunculus in Goethe's "Faust," bottled up, each in his own little vitreous habitation, through whose contracted neck he views a certain prescribed patch of the universe and concludes that his restricted field of vision embraces the totality of God's creation;

> Ye think the rustic cackle of your burg
> The murmur of the world.

Now, I have heard it advanced by certain Catholics, as an evidence of the great ad-

vantages to be found in our largest non-Catholic colleges, that the professors in these vast institutions are specialists, each one in his own line the best that can be had. The sentence I have just quoted would be an admirable answer to that banality. But let us consider the matter a little further. An institution of specialists is the one place that I would most studiously avoid in selecting a college for the education of my boys. To put an untrained, unformed, unstable mind into the hands of a specialist is to deliver it over to intellectual bondage. When a boy goes to college his mind is crude and pliable. It is then most susceptible to those formative influences which fashion and determine it for the future. This is the critical period; if it be warped then, it will never get rid of its contortion. The true idea of education is to broaden and straighten the mind, not to narrow and twist it. The system, therefore, under whose dominance it should come, ought to be graded, symmetrical, balanced, and unified; it ought to lead to a definite and intelligible end, whence it takes its motive

power, and in which it culminates as a perfected whole. A haphazard accumulation of specialties, though they range the whole gamut of human knowledge, without that unity of plan which comes from a well-defined end judiciously governing all parts, is a mere heap of erudition. And this is the confusion to which secularism has brought undergraduate education.

I say undergraduate education, for you must not suppose that I depreciate specialism where it properly belongs. It has its place in post-graduate or university education, after the broad basis of a liberal training has been laid, and the foundations are secure enough to bear with ease the weight of any superstructure whatever. After the mind has been morally and mentally matured, then, and then only, may it safely and rationally commit itself to the direction of specialism. It will then have the power to resist the inevitably narrowing tendencies of specialism, and possess the discretion to safeguard against its limitations.

But when specialism is introduced into

undergraduate schools, it becomes a factor of disintegration, and reduces education to the level of a mere apprenticeship to some intellectual trade. When specialism goes hand in hand with electivism, as is now the fashion, then indeed is havoc made in the educational world, and mental devastation spreads like a plague. But of this more in my next.

Sincerely,

C. B. P.

X.

Electivism in Education.

My Dear Henry:

You have a son of college age. Let us suppose that you have determined to send him to one of our largest non-Catholic colleges, where specialism reigns, and electivism, in the words of the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges, safeguards the "sanctity of the individual's gifts and will-powers." You call your son to you on the eve of his departure to this institution where he is to be given full freedom in the lumber room of erudition, and address him in this fashion: "My son, before you leave, allow me—you must use no word consistent with parental authority, for that would be a gross violation of the sanctity of his gifts and will-powers—my son, allow me, now that you are about to enter upon

your college career, to counsel you in the wisdom of my experience. You are going to one of the largest colleges in the country, magnificently endowed, splendidly equipped, with a corps of specialist professors, the best that money can procure. You will therefore have every advantage in the field of education that modern energy and large resources can gather together. You will, I trust, duly appreciate your opportunities, and apply yourself diligently; for you are just at that critical period of your life, when your mental make-up and character are determined for good or ill throughout your life. I hope that my words will weigh with you, for they are very serious and profoundly concern your highest welfare. You will find at this institution a freedom of choice of studies. This is a privilege that was not accorded to me in my day at college. I had to go through a required curriculum, embracing a rather wide range of studies. But I understand that nowadays this method is considered old fogy, out of date, and a constraint upon the sanctity of the individual's gifts and

will-powers. Nevertheless, I trust that you will suffer yourself to be guided by me in this matter, though I would not think of dictating to you in the election of your studies, for I would not presume to intrude upon the sacred precincts of your individual gifts or shackle your will-power by the assertion of my obsolete parental authority. Although your mind is still unformed, and your will rather unstable, out of that overwhelming respect I entertain for the sanctity of your mental and moral gifts, which modern pedagogical research has recently discovered in its wonderful psychological advance, I refrain from brutally imposing my parental fiat upon you. I would rather suggest to you that course which the wisdom of my own experience and the mature judgment of my own mind show to be most beneficial and best adapted to achieve the end of education. I would suggest very urgently—but mind you it is only a suggestion, for I ever keep in mind the sanctity of your precious individuality —that you elect as the most important studies, indeed I may say most essential to

a liberal education, Latin and Greek, mathematics, literature, history, chemistry, physics, geology, some modern language, and, as the crown of all, metaphysics. I know that a curriculum embracing such a range is nowadays looked upon as somewhat antiquated and not adapted to the practical purposes of modern life. But I trust that I may be allowed to differ from this view. Not that I would aggressively assert my opinion, but it was the way I was educated, and I must confess to a strong bias in its favor. Still I would not insist upon imposing it upon you, for the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges, and he stands high in the pedagogical world, at least as an executive, tells us that we must respect the sanctity of your gifts. Go, my son, to the intellectual freedom, which the wisdom of modern pedagogy has prepared for you. But do, I beg of you, remember my suggestion. Take my advice, if it be not in conflict with the sanctity of your individuality, and although you may not now perceive its wisdom, I am sure that if you follow it now, in after years, when

your mind is matured and your experience of life ripened, you will never regret having profited by your father's counsel."

O blessed phrase under which pedagogical secularism seeks shelter against the shafts of common sense and the wisdom of the centuries! The sanctity of the individual's gifts and will-powers! *Mirabile dictu!* Verily folly never lacks a mask of sobriety, and even of virtue, when occasion demands it.

My dear friend, in this fictitious paternal admonition, which you will pardon my putting in your mouth, you have the very picture of the ridiculous soul of educational secularism. Your son goes off with your weighty words whistling in his heedless ears like the summer wind, if he be the kind of lad which the world has known from the beginnings of human nature. Your words, like those of old Polonius, beat weakly fluttering against the gale, whilst the pinnace of youth with pleasure at the helm goes with the merry winds bounding over the sunlit seas. Let me here quote

some pertinent words from the Jesuit Father's pamphlet (*"President Eliot and Jesuit Colleges," by Rev. Timothy Brosnahan, S. J.*) which I mentioned in my last letter:

> The present writer's experience does not cover the period between the ages of eight and eighteen [the period of elective choice advocated by the-President-of-one-of-our-largest-colleges], but he does know from some years of observation, that between the ages of fourteen and twenty, the average boy will work, like electricity, along the line of least resistance. And he is confident that his experience is not peculiar. To apply to their education, therefore, university methods applicable only to men of intellectual and moral maturity, before they are able to feel judiciously the relations of their studies to their life's purpose, must necessarily put to some extent the standard of education under their control, and almost wholly commit to them the character of their own formation.

Here is sanity. Here are reason and experience uttering wisdom. Contrast it with the folly, which wraps its absurdity in a catchy phrase, whose true application is the reverse of its author's intention. Listen again to the wisdom of the Jesuit Father; he is stripping the mask from secularism's "cipher face of rounded foolishness":

Here I may notice the appeal that is made in behalf of this policy to the "sanctity of the individual's gifts and will-powers." "The greatest reverence is due to boys," cries the old Roman satirist, and who will dare gainsay it? But an abiding sense of that very reverence inspires Jesuit educators with the belief that it is an unhallowed thing to make the plastic souls and hearts and minds of those entrusted to their care the subjects of untried, revolutionary, and wholesale experiment. Precisely because they believe in the sanctity of the individual they will not admit the advisability of subjecting them—as though they were small quadrupeds—to novel experiments in educational laboratories. Because they know that the boy of today will be tomorrow the maker of his country's destiny, will fashion its future, will shape for good or ill the forces that will give it stability or bring it ruin, they have hesitated to announce a go-as-you-please program of studies and a haphazard and chaotic system of formation. Because they believe the soul of a boy a sacred thing, destined for an eternal life hereafter, to be attained by a noble life here, they have recognized the delicacy and responsibility of their functions, and have been satisfied with a safer and more conservative advance.

Yes, my dear friend, the soul of a boy is a sacred thing, a sacred trust confided to the father's care and vigilance. As in the old mythological fable, the world has been placed upon the back of Atlas by the gods, so has this weighty responsibility of the

child's education, the world in embryo, been placed upon the parent's shoulders. If Atlas were to shake off this burden, what would become of the world? If we were to reject this responsibility, what would become of our children? what discord and confusion would result in human society! What discord and confusion does result because there are parents who are blind to the sacred character of their trust! And that higher other responsibility in the eternal life! Should not this thought sober any parent, though drunk with the seductions of secularism?

Sincerely,

C. B. P.

XI.

Utilitarianism in Education and a Classical Flourish.

My Dear Henry:

I have pointed out the dangers to which secularism is driving the ship of education, specialism and electivism, twin monsters of the same inglorious parent.

Amongst the yelping progeny kenneled within the womb of secularism not the least noisy is utilitarianism. I put the situation under Miltonic imagery to bring it more distinctly home to the mind, especially when that mind would like to be both deaf and blind. The reality of things, ugly things as well as beautiful, often finds its best recognition in an analogy.

You know the hue and cry against the classics in education: Greek and Latin have no practical value in life; why waste

time upon them; they don't help to make money; they can't be used in business or "the strenuous life"; in truth, do they not rather impede and hamper a man in his pursuit of this world's prizes by leading him to believe that he is mentally superior to every-day conditions, by "sickling o'er the native hue of resolution with the pale cast of thought," in short by unfitting him for practical issues and living realities? And then utilitarianism imagines that the mere statement of its position is a sweeping victory; and so it is, for the mind imbued with secularism; such a mind has a natural affection for the offspring of its own prejudice.

Let me at once make a frank admission: Yes, I confess that there are many things in which a classical education is of no practical avail. It won't make a better blacksmith, or bricklayer, or carpenter, or grave-digger, or money changer, or what-not in avocations of this grade. I will add, moreover, that I have known men, by nature blacksmiths, forced through a classical course by ambitious but injudicious par-

ents, to their own great mental agony and nobody's good. I have generally found that these people soon fall back, by a law of mental gravity, from the level to which they had been artificially hoisted not with their own but somebody else's petard. I do not know whether it has spoiled their genius for blacksmithing or not. I trust that Divine Providence has a special tender solicitude for these victims of not their own but others' folly. At any rate, I rest satisfied in the assurance that the natural weight of their own parts will in the course of time find its proper level in the vast utilities of this work-a-day world, and if they have been imprudently led into an undue estimate of their own talents, the rough bruises of an ever-unfailing experience will before long shock them into a realization of the eternal fitness of things.

But what I do protest against is that the misfits of these unfortunates should be pointed out as horrible examples of the failure of classical education, and as incontrovertible evidence of its false valuation. You remember the old Horatian

maxim of fitting the burden to the shoulders? Dare I quote the lines in the face of modern secularism? Hush, ye burly winds of the strenuous life, just one little moment, that we may hear the whispered murmur of the ancient wisdom echoing from the classic world, just one little moment, I pray, and then you may gather again your rushing whirlwinds, and toss the fluttering accents of that far-away tongue, like dead leaves, in the onward sweep of your mighty cyclone!

Sumite materiam vestris . . . aequam
Viribus: et versate diu, quid ferre recusent,
Quid valeant humeri.

I wonder if the shade of Q. Horatius Flaccus thrilled, just a little, in its Stygian night at the distant echo of this unusual susurrus of his own lines from the upper world! And not hearing more, did it, out of sheer force of its diurnal habit when it breathed this Jovian atmosphere, seek consolation in the old familiar custom always prefaced with the remark, *nunc est bibendum!* Alas! Q. Horatius Flaccus, how

badly did you build your immortality upon the fancied endurance of Cæsar's empire and imagine a vain thing when you vaunted that you had built a monument of fame more solid than brass to outlast the eternal pyramids:

> *Exegi monumentum aere perennius,*
> *Regalique situ pyramidum altius;*
> *Quod non imber edax—*

But I desist. Pardon me, O ye mighty Substantialities of the Strenuous Life, ye Titans of Secularism, that I have dared to flaunt before your Majesties the mortuary lines of this ancient poet, whose bones, to slightly paraphrase Sir Thomas Browne, have rested quietly in the grave under the drums and tramplings of nineteen centuries of conquest!

Forgive this diversion, my dear friend, this straying into old pastures. I grew reminiscent. I was dreaming of our college days, and the glamour of old Horace crept over my antiquated imagination; so I yielded to the soft enchantment, unheeding, for the moment, the barking of the

hound of utilitarianism and the glowering eyes of secularism. I realize that I have been guilty of the unpardonable crime of *lese majesté! Mea culpa, mea culpa! Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi!*

Sincerely,

C. B. P.

XII.

The Object of the Classics in Education.

My Dear Henry:

In my last I quoted Horace apropos of the point I was there considering, and then took a short excursus into Elysian fields forbidden to us living with the heavy din of modern progress in our ears. You tell me that my quotations stirred your spirit, and that you actually took up your Horace and read some of the "Ars Poetica" and the two odes from which I quoted, and some others besides. And the breath of that far-away time of our college days came blowing, like a breeze of summer filled with the perfume of enflowered zephyrs, across the arid wastes of your fancy so long dried up by the steady sirocco of business-life? My dear fellow, that draught of Horace evidently had its effect. You will be writing me an ode, before long, singing the praises

of Maecenas's bibulous and poetic friend. And you tell me that you have made the resolution of reading a bit of old Horace every day, just to keep the waters stirred. Bravo! I am delighted beyond measure! Isn't it refreshing to go back now and again to those vernal regions of our youth, whose fond memory keeps bubbling and sparkling,

O Fons Bandusiae splendidior vitro,

if we will only go thither to drink! And how much keener, and broader, and deeper grows the appreciation of the maturer mind when we raise these Castalian draughts to our lips! And then not only to Rome, but to those original fountains, whence Rome herself drank so copiously! To hear once again the ancient Muse sing the direful wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus,

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, Θεά, Πηληιάδα' Ἀχιλῆος
Οὐλομένην·

and hear the clang of Apollo's silver bow, as the angry god hurtles his arrows against the offending Greeks,

Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γέν τ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο·

or pace up and down the shores of the loud-sounding sea with the disconsolate Chryses,

Βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.

But I am off again; I will stop. To think of Greek in the face of utilitarianism is like taunting a barbarian with his lack of civilization. It was bad enough to mention Horace, but to speak of Homer is simply twisting the barb in the inflamed wound.

And now to return to our mutton. The classics in education are not intended to be an apprenticeship to a trade, to fit a man for modern business methods, or to prepare him specifically for a profession. Their object in education is to broaden, cultivate, and discipline the mind; not with a view to this or that, but as the liberal basis for any avocation, barring, of course, mere manual utilities. Their purpose is to make a man more of a man; to widen his mental horizon; to train the mind's eye to large perspectives and accurate proportions; to cul-

tivate in him a juster appreciation of the niceties, the accuracies and values of words; to beget habits of mental discretion and distinction, until he become fashioned to that broader and nobler mind, which soars above pettiness and disdains narrowness. A man who has achieved this broad, mental habitude is in the true sense liberal, free from the vulgarities of the illiterate and the prejudices of the ignorant. Blend this state of culture with that severer discipline of mind which mathematics and metaphysics bestow, and you add to the graces of culture the force of logic and the power of thought. Infuse all this, as its practical principle, with the habit of virtue, which is the gift of religion, and you have your rounded man, developed and balanced in all his faculties, harmonized and unified in his character. This is the ideal of Catholic education. The object of such a process is the attainment of truth. Here is the man with the open mind, enfranchised and broadened. Here is the man matured in discipline, trained to think, reflect, reason, and act. Does such

an education unfit a man for life? The stupidity of the objection! You might as well say that the athlete is rendered unfit for the arena by the process of his training. Equally foolish the objection against the value of the classical tongues because they are not used in our daily intercourse with our fellow-men; you might as well urge the uselessness of the athlete's apparatus, by which he develops his strength and agility, because he does not actually bring them into the scene of his contests.

I affirm that a man educated along the lines I have indicated is better fitted, better prepared than one whose mind and character have been cabined, confined and narrowed by the limitations of specialism and electivism; that he will enter upon any field of life, stronger, saner, broader.

Sincerely,

C. B. P.

XIII.

Education and Taste.

My Dear Henry:

There is another phase of the subject touched on in my last letter, which requires emphasis, and the more so because its relation to the question of education is not always recognized. It is the question of the formation of taste. You know the chaos that now makes anarchy in the world of esthetics. Caprice and opinion, all the prejudices of individual likes and dislikes collide and conflict in plentiful confusion. No objective standard is recognized. Coteries and cliques, fads and fashions, rise and fall with the gusts of fancy blowing anon from this and anon from the other quarter. I do not know whether you have observed it or not, but you will find that this confusion in the domain of taste, which

is correlative with the region of art, is keeping pace with the growing prejudice against the classics in education. This universal anarchy in esthetics goes *pari passu* with the advance of secularism in education. Now secularism in education is essentially revolution against tradition and authority. It is the ultimate outcome, carried over into the sphere of pedagogy, of that rebellion in religious and political life whose delirium mistook the prostitute of license for the goddess of liberty. It has taken something over a hundred years to show the world—and even now there is but a glimmer—that the red cap may after all be close akin to the fool's cap. It is, therefore, refreshing to read in a modern author (*"Life in Poetry, Law in Taste," by William John Courthope, C.B., M.A., Oxon*) the following confession:

> No right-thinking man has given up his belief in the advantages of rational and constitutional liberty; but, on the other hand, every sound reasoner is much more ready than he was to acknowledge that Liberty itself is not the solution of human ills; that much more is to be said than was supposed for such old authoritative methods of dealing with men and things as were not

long ago accounted relics of benighted barbarism; that in fact, the remedy of *laisser faire,* of letting things go, of leaving each man as a separate unit to think, speak, and do as he likes, however simple and attractive it seemed in the outset, has itself been the cause of a thousand difficulties, which require to be dealt with on quite another principle.

No; I am not wandering from the subject. I am only bringing you around to another view of the elephant, that you may see the beast from all sides. The book from which I have just quoted is practically throughout a protest against the spirit of secularism in its invasion of the kingdom of art, and especially literary art. The author calls it the doctrine of *laisser faire,* but this is simply another name for the same falsehood. Throughout his work he appeals to tradition and authority, in the light of right reason, as the sources to which we must return in order to establish securely the law of taste, which the dragon of *laisser faire,* like Fafnir in the Niebelung myth, has of late been sottishly hiding in his fetid caverns under the earth. What is more, the very chapter from which the above quotation is taken sets forth a spe-

cial argument, as the summing up of the author's discourse, for the retention of the classics in education, as the only safeguard of the law of taste, the only barrier to the muddy tide of *laisser faire,* or secularism as I have named it. Mr. Courthope, the author, is at one with Sir Richard Jebb in affirming "the advantage, nay, the necessity, of recognizing a definite standard of taste for the purposes of education," and quotes the latter gentleman as follows in his lecture on humanism in education:

I do not think that there is any exaggeration in what Mr. Froude said thirteen years ago, that if we ever lose those studies (the humanities) our national taste and the tone of our national intellect will suffer a serious decline. Classical studies help to preserve sound standards of literature. It is not difficult to lose such standards, even with a nation with the highest material civilization, with abounding mental activity, and with a great literature of its own. It is peculiarly easy to do so in days when the lighter and more ephemeral kinds of writing form for many people the staple of daily reading. The fashions of the hour may start a movement not in the best direction, which may go on until the path is difficult to retrace. The humanities, if they cannot prevent such a movement, can do something to temper and counteract it; because they appeal to permanent things, to the instinct of beauty in human nature, and to the

emotions, and in any one who is at all susceptible to their influence, they develop a literary conscience.

Now let me quote you another passage from Courthope. Against the argument that the classical languages are not practical and useful as a preparatory discipline for everyday life, he very pertinently answers:

The fallacy underlying this reasoning is as transparent as it is time-honored. The *raison-d'être* of our universities is to promote liberal education, and the aim of liberal education is not to impart knowledge for utilitarian purposes, but so to cultivate the moral and intellectual faculties of the scholar as to fit him, on his entrance into life, for the duties of a citizen. Such has been the fundamental idea of the English university from the days of the Renaissance; such is still the effect on the mind of our great Oxford school of the *literae humaniores*. To depart from this ideal, to do away with this foundation, to attempt to build up a fabric of culture on the study of modern languages and literatures, without reference to the art and literature of antiquity, would be to reduce the system of liberal education to anarchy. Men of independent minds no doubt make their way by native force of character; but education in itself must be organized, and how is it possible for a man to be comprehensively instructed in the history of human society, in the meaning of law and government, in the various relations of thought, and in the useful

and beautiful arts of expression, unless he begins at the beginning?

It is upon this ground, my dear friend, that Catholic education takes its stand. It is to this ideal that it has tenaciously clung in the face of contumely and despite the growing clamor of secularism. Its loyalty to the *literae humaniores* has brought upon it the *odium pedagogicum* of secularism. It has been justly deaf to the vulgar chorus of the profane crowd. It refuses to break with the fecund past and tear the tree of science from those deep roots, through which it draws its richest sustenance. It appreciates at their just due, tradition and authority, and in the justice of its cause stands firm to resist reckless and impudent innovations. The event will manifest its triumph. Let secularism keep up its present extravagant pace, and in the second generation from our day the only educated men in the country will be those who have been trained in our Catholic colleges.

Sincerely,

C. B. P.

XIV.

The World *versus* God in Education.

My Dear Henry:

When you urge that worldly advantages are a weighty consideration in this question of education; that a boy sent to one of our largest non-Catholic colleges forms associations and makes friendships which may prove of the greatest service to him in his advancement in after life, I begin to wonder if you have yet succeeded in getting rid of the cataract that blinds the mental vision of so many fathers, although you have repeatedly acknowledged the cogency and validity of my reasoning. Is college simply a kindergarten to fashionable society, a mere apprenticeship to future business advantages? If this be the proper view, why, then away with the farce, which you are pleased to call education. If education is to be prostituted to purposes of

this character, have done with the pretence and call the affair by its true name, mere pandering to the most ignoble traits in human nature. Be honest enough to say squarely that you send your boys to a non-Catholic college not for the purpose of educating them, but that they may profit in after life by the worldly associations they may have made there. Be candid and admit that you are imperiling their faith and sacrificing their true education to purely material advantages, as much the figments of your own imagination as substantial realities. Do not cajole yourself by arrant sophisms into the belief that you are not jeopardizing your children's faith and morals, when you voluntarily offer them on the altar of secularism; for they are made of the same human stuff as everybody else's children, and you know perfectly well that stubble will burn in the fire. Be honest; for honesty does not courtesy to folly. Say to your God, that it does profit a man to gain something of the things of this world even at the peril of his immortal soul.

This is a question of souls. Do you weigh the trifles of time against immortal destiny? I am speaking as a Catholic to a Catholic. Secularism knows nothing of souls. Do you remember Dante's symbolism when he describes the three beasts who bar the way of man up the mountain of Truth? The lion of pride, the wolf of avarice, the leopard of sensuality. This symbolism is taken from Jeremias: "Wherefore a lion out of the wood hath slain them, a wolf in the evening hath spoiled them, a leopard watcheth for their cities; everyone that shall go out thence shall be taken." Will you send your children out of the City of Faith into the perils of that wilderness which Dante describes as full of the bitterness of death! How does the poet, in whose person man is typified, escape the ravenous jaws of the three beasts that beset his path? By following reason fortified by grace and illuminated by faith; by giving himself up to the guidance of Vergil inspired by Beatrice. See in this the symbol of the ideal of Catholic

education: Vergil, classicism, and reason; Beatrice, grace and faith.

Sifted of all its chaff, this question of education comes down to the plain and simple realization of the responsibility of the trust which God has confided to the parent. Should it require certain sacrifices, make them. Parentage is in itself a sacrifice. If the Faith is not worthy of your sacrifice, it is of no value at all. Worldly advantages are merest dross when balanced against the eternal values of the soul.

But in truth we make no sacrifice even of the worldly interests of our children when we confine them to the Catholic system of education; in the proper sense of the word Catholic education is alone true education; it is the only system that rounds out and perfects character, gives balance and unity to intellect and will, broadens the mind, cultivates the imagination under the restraints of right reason, and fulfils all that is meant by the term liberal education.

Sincerely,

C. B. P.